

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 MC-01 ACDA-05 AID-05 /087 W

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R 170732Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1758

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, KU

SUBJECT: KUWAITI ARMS PURCHASES AND ARMY DAY CELEBRATION

SUMMARY: ON DECEMBER 9 GOK MINISTER OF DEFENSE MADE PUBLIC, IN CONNECTION WITH "ARMY DAY" CEREMONIES, KUWAITI PURCHASES OF ARMS FROM US AND FRANCE AND HINTED AT POSSIBLE FUTURE MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS. END SUMMARY.

1. AS ALREADY WIDELY REPORTED IN PRESS, ARMY DAY WAS CELEBRATED IN KUWAIT ON DECEMBER 9 WITH, INTER ALIA, AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY INTERIOR AND DEFENSE MINISTER, SHAIKH SA'AD, THAT GOK HAS PURCHASED MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING US AND FRENCH JET FIGHTERS, FRENCH HELICOPTERS AND AMERICAN GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES. DISCLOSURES WERE MADE DURING PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THREE-HOUR ARMY AND AIR FORCE PARADE DURING WHICH AMIR AWARDED DECORATIONS TO "JAHRA" AND "YARMUK"

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BRIGADES FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION ON THE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN

FRONTS DURING OCTOBER WAR.

2. SHAIKH SA'AD DID NOT DETAIL PURCHASES, EXCEPT TO STATE THAT "A LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICAN 'SKYHAWKS' AND THE MOST MODERN AMERICAN MISSILES" WERE ORDERED. HE WAS NOT ASKED WHETHER IT WAS INTENT OF GOK TO DIVERT FRENCH MIRAGES JET FIGHTERS ON ORDER TO THIRD COUNTRIES. WHEN QUERIED, HE SAID KUWAIT "IS AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE USSR ON MILITARY EQUIPMENT PURCHASE REQUESTS." SA'AD ALSO SAID KUWAIT PLANS TO STRENGTHEN ITS NAVAL FORCES, AND THAT CONSULTANTS (UNNAMED) HAD BEEN ASKED TO ADVISE ON A SUITABLE SITE FOR A NAVAL BASE. HE ADDED THAT TWO MILITARY AIR BASES BEING BUILT BY A YUGOSLAV COMPANY WOULD INCLUDE RUNWAY RADARS, ARMS STORES AND MAINTENANCE FACILITIES. FINALLY, HE REFERRED TO INTENTION OF GOK TO ESTABLISH MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM IN FINAL TWO YEARS OF KUWAITI SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM.

3. SHAIKH SA'AD DISCLOSED NO NEW INFORMATION. HIS COMMENTS APPEAR TAILORED TO INSURE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION THAT KUWAIT INTENDS TO DEVELOP SMALL BUT EFFECTIVE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WITHOUT RESORT TO UNDUE RELIANCE ON SINGLE ARMS SOURCE. (IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, SHAIKH SA'AD ASSERTED HIS REFERENCE TO USSR DID NOT PORTEND KUWAITI PURCHASE OF RUSSIAN ARMS; IT SIMPLY ENABLED HIM CLAIM THAT GOK HAD INVESTIGATED ALL POSSIBLE SOURCES IN SEARCH FOR BEST EQUIPMENT.)

4. ABOUT 2,500 MEN PARTICIPATED IN THE PARADE, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE JAHRA AND YARMUK BRIGADES. NO NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT WAS DISPLAYED.
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